

II TAXES AND TROOPS

that we be not driven from the Fortress; and let us be exceedingly careful to unite as one Man in its Defence.

Yours, &c.
CETHEGUS^s

1. Samuel Inslee and Anthony Carr.
2. The French and Indian War, 1754-1763.
3. The reference is to the boycott instituted during the successful protest against the Stamp Act in 1765-1766.
4. The "treachery of Boston" refers to the increased belligerence of the Bostonians in flaunting imperial authority, which resulted in British troops being sent to the Massachusetts capital in October 1768; it was thought by many that the provocative action of the Bay Colony served only to induce Great Britain to take a harder line against America.
5. It is not certain which "Cethegus" the writer has in mind; probably Marcus Cornelius, the Roman general and magistrate who died in 196 B.C.

14 Hunterdon County Freeholders to John Hart and Samuel Tucker

[West Jersey Manuscripts, New Jersey Historical Society. This document is inaccurately transcribed and printed in *NJA*, 10:269-73.]

It was to be expected, given the nature of the arguments raised against the Stamp Act and Townshend duties, that Jerseymen would begin to challenge the presence of troops in the province on political and constitutional as well as economic grounds. That a group of West Jersey farmers would consider it necessary to address their elected representatives on the matter indicates the seriousness of their convictions about the threat to civil liberties and public morals posed by a standing army. (No action was taken since the letter was an instruction rather than a petition.) "Honest John" Hart (1713?-1779), Hopewell farmer, served in the assembly from 1761 to 1771. He also performed the duties of justice of the peace and judge of the county court of common pleas. An ardent Whig, he was a member of various local patriot organizations as well as the Provincial Congress (1775-1776) and the Continental Congress (1776), where he signed the Declaration of Independence. Samuel Tucker (1721-1789), Trenton merchant and landowner, held the government posts of justice of the peace, high sheriff of the county, and assemblyman from 1769 to 1776. He was extremely active in the protest-independence movement at both the local

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and provincial levels (president of the Provincial Congress in 1775-1776), but adopted a political posture in late 1776 that has been interpreted as either prudent neutrality or Loyalism.

[May 1771]

Gentlemen

Whereas we understand his Excellency the Governor has adjourn'd the House of Assembly in order to consider further on divers Affairs presented to the House last Session: In which Interval the Members might have an opportunity to Consult their Consituents—

We therefore without the least Defection in our Zeal for His Majesty, or desire to promote Contention between the Different Branches of the Legislative Body in this Province; yet desirous that our Liberties may be secur'd to us, do agree with the Resolution taken by the Assembly at their last Sitting; and approve the Reasons given to His Excellency for not complying with several Requisitions made respecting Incouragement for the Augmenting his Majesties Regular Troops in this Province and Granting supplies towards their Support.

Moreover we your Constituents Subject these following Queries to your further Consideration.

1st. Whether to have the King's troops station'd among us in Time of Peace is Constitutional and Agreeable to our Rights and Priviledges?¹

2nd. Whether they are or can be of any use to us, or whether any proper officer of this Government has the Command of them in any Case of Immergency?

3rd. Whether Regular Troops does not spread Vice and Immorality in a Country where they are maintained in Idleness?

4th. Is it consistent with Honour and Justice to support those who do us no Service?

5th. Whether there is not Danger that a Military Power may in Time interrupt the Proper Influence and Management of Civil Administrations?

We think Gentlemen the Consideration of these Things with what you have already urged will Constrain you to abide by your former Resolutions, and that you will Continue to make the Ease, Safety, Interest and Morals of the Province the Subject of Your Zealous Attention.

Sign'd by the Freeholders of Hunterdon May 1771²

1. It should be noted that the army barracks at Trenton (then in Hunterdon County) had not been occupied since the conclusion of the French and Indian War in 1763.

2. The document was signed by Hezekiah Stout, Moses Hart, William Sherd, Nehemiah Paxton, Nathaniel Stout, Benjamin Stout, Joab Houghton, Henry Van Kirk, Andrew Stout, James Mattison, Abraham Stout, William Chamberlin, and William Bryant. It is open to question whether a memorial signed by thirteen individuals, five of whom were members of the Stout family and most or all of whom were John Hart's fellow-communicants in the Hopewell Baptist Church, represents a consensus of Hunterdon residents; nonetheless,

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such sentiments are representative of the concerns about—and fears of—the army which were rapidly gaining currency among Jerseymen.

15 Aaron Leaming to his Cape May Constituents

[Aaron Leaming Papers, f.2, 709, Frank L. Stewart Collection, Glassboro State College Learning Resource Center.]

The dispute between Governor William Franklin and the assembly over the supplying of the barracks came to a head in 1770-1771: the lower house adamantly refused to authorize any more funds for the soldiers, and the chief executive prorogued the legislature. Aaron Leaming II (1715-1780), who represented Cape May in the assembly from 1745 to 1771, was one of the leading opponents of military expenditures. In fact, throughout his long legislative career, Leaming, one of the wealthiest residents of the county, consistently resisted public appropriations of any kind. In explaining his position to his constituents, he demonstrates how Jerseymen viewed the problem of troops within the context of post-1763 imperial developments.

May 26, 1771

Dear & worthy Gentlemen

The Affair now between the Governor and Assembly appears to me to be more Delicate in its nature and of Greater consequence than any thing that has been agitated in the House since I have had the honour of being your Representative.

As you have undoubtedly a great deal depending it is necessary you should be fully informed of this Subject which I shall endeavour to explain [in as few words as I can to be intelligible].¹

It should Seem that the People in Great Britain had little knowledge of these Colonies before the commencement of the War in 1755. The Theater of that war being in North America Necessarily called to these parts from Great Britain a large number of General Officers and other Gentlemen of Rank and consequence at home. These Gentlemens business lay mostly in the Great Cities; either with the Governors or other [of] the principal Gentlemen of them places; or if they were travelling they Generally took that rout and were advised to those places where they could be sure of the best accomodations. In all these places the utmost abilities of the inhabitants were exerted to make their entertainment agreeable. Some of these were Scot[c]hmen who had been long used to the Barrens and poverty of that nation; many of them were English, and All of them had been bred up in the firm belief that America was a mere desart of poverty and distress, and the Inhabitants little if any better than Savages. But when they saw the Rich Tables and Beads that were dressed for them, and that North America raised 20,000 men and enabled England to give Law to